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NSC STAFF FOR RICK WATERS  
DEPT FOR G/TIP

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: EGYPT: GOVERNMENT FORMING INTER-MINISTERIAL BODY  
TO ADDRESS TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (TIP)

Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) On October 12, MFA Assistant Minister for Multilateral Affairs Naela Gabr told Charge the GOE is creating an inter-ministerial body to coordinate TIP policy. Gabr acknowledged the Prime Minister's office has not yet issued the decree establishing the new coordinating body (it is due out in coming weeks), but argued that the organization is established, and that the "national machinery" to tackle TIP is in place. The GOE's TIP committee will be chaired by MFA, with input from Interior, Justice, and the Public Prosecutor, among others. Gabr said the committee will also coordinate with quasi-governmental bodies like the National Councils for Women and Human Rights, and NGOs. The Charge thanked Gabr and said the USG looks forward to working with the GOE to effect improvements in legislation, prosecution, victim protection, and awareness raising.

¶2. (SBU) Gabr protested Egypt's Tier 2 Watchlist designation, saying "this category doesn't reflect the situation." She pressed the Charge on how the USG determines the estimated number of TIP victims alleged to transit Egypt. The Charge acknowledged that USG estimates, based on anecdotal press reports and Israeli reports, are not exact. The Charge urged Gabr to focus GOE energies on taking action against trafficking regardless of the exact size of the problem. The key, said the Charge, is for the GOE to take credible actions demonstrating its clear commitment to tackle TIP, and get Egypt off the Tier 2 Watchlist.

¶3. (SBU) Gabr and her deputy, Office Director for Human Rights Ehab Gamal Eldin, repeated familiar complaints about the USG's assessment of TIP in Egypt, including the following: --Egypt is neither a country of origin nor destination and thus cannot be expected to undertake efforts like origin or destination countries; --the GOE strongly doubts that there is significant internal trafficking of minors for the purposes of domestic labor (although the new inter-ministerial committee will assess this issue); and --the GOE wonders if the total number of TIP victims going through Sinai, which Gabr allowed might be 100 per year, truly merited the resources and effort being devoted to the question.

¶4. (SBU) Charge reminded Gabr that the State Department report listed additional concerns about trafficking internal to Egypt, such as child trafficking. Also, he suggested that a thorough assessment of all these problems might lead to clearer policy choices. Gabr demurred.

¶5. (SBU) On October 15, Public Prosecutor (Attorney General equivalent) Abdel Meguid Mahmoud confirmed to ECPO Minister Counselor that the Prime Minister's office would issue the decree launching the new TIP committee "within a few weeks." Mahmoud also expressed reservations about the accuracy of USG information on TIP in Egypt, but emphasized the GOE is fully committed to using existing and new mechanisms to combat and eradicate TIP.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: Gabr's admission that the GOE has formed a new commission focused on trafficking is welcome, though we will continue to push the GOE to take greater ownership of the problem. We will be meeting with other GOE players on TIP in the next few weeks and will reinforce our message about the need for prompt GOE action.  
JONES